



## Meal vouchers (deducted from our salaries) Not such a bad idea for Luxembourg?

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You eventually recently read about the idea that Brussels Staff could be handed meal vouchers. Then you might think, why not in Luxembourg?

First of all, do not think that meal vouchers would be a gift from our administration, to the contrary, they would be deducted in full from your salary. In addition, they are generally only usable in their issuing country (in this case, Luxembourg).

On the other hand, Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg understands the interest in the meal voucher, but questions its usefulness, for several reasons.

Given the outsourcing of services, the Covid crisis has undermined canteens in Brussels: given teleworking, few customers go to canteens; there is only one canteen and a few cafeterias left open.

In Luxembourg, the situation is very different: catering staff are hired directly by the Commission. Consequently, the preference for meal vouchers might mean the end of canteens in Luxembourg, which would not only be disastrous for the staff in place in canteens and cafeterias, but would also be very damaging to colleagues who use this offer. What is more, there are not always many shops or other places to eat near the Commission's buildings in Luxembourg.

An essential point: canteens and cafeterias in the workplace also constitute a place where people meet and the last place where the social link around a meal or a coffee can still be maintained. They are essential for human relationships, especially for those who have felt isolated during the confinement and who will probably be the first to suffer from their disappearance. Already with the policies of reducing staff without reducing the workload, staff members always have less time and opportunities to interact with their colleagues.

Very often, coffee/canteen meetings also improve the efficiency of work, encouraging discussions that are as useful as they are unforeseen, leading to solutions that no email or meeting would have been able to find with such speed. If we imagine teleworking coupled during face-to-face meals delivered and swallowed up in front of the screen to "save" time, what will remain human in our way of working? Getting to the canteen is also quick and convenient, when you do not want or do not have in the vicinity something to eat.

In addition, commuters do not necessarily have time to prepare meals or the desire to be loaded on public transport. It is likely that many of us would be very bothered without a canteen.

In conclusion, Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg invites you to reflect about the consequences, sometimes harmful, of such a tempting idea.

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